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This volume of 'Letters on Taste'—more accurately 'Letters concerning Taste'—was COOPER's most popular work. Appearing anonymously in 1754, it hastily ran through three editions, wrested a grunt of approval from Dr. JOHNSON, and won such unstinted praise from smaller critics that in 1757 COOPER acknowledged it as his own.

This volume puts at rest the question of COOPER's relation to the song under discussion. In Letter xiv, to "Leonora," congratulating her upon "the accomplishment of all your own wishes, and those of a man who I believe is as dear to you as yourself," he adds,

"As it was not then in my power to amuse you with any poetry of my own composition, I shall now take the liberty to send you, without any apology, an old song, wrote above a hundred years ago upon a similar occasion, by the happy bridegroom himself. And tho' this old song has been so little heard of, and as yet introduced into no modern collection, I dare venture to pronounce there is in it more genuine poetry, easy turn of thought, elegance of diction, delicacy of sentiment, tenderness of heart, and natural taste for happiness, than in all the compositions of this sort I ever read in any language."

The song is then given in full. Bishop PERCY, eleven years later, inserts it in his 'Reliques' with the following comment:

"This beautiful address to conjugal love . . . was, I believe, first printed in a volume of Miscellaneous Poems by several hands, published by David Lewis, 1729. It is there said, how truly I know not, to be a translation from the ancient British language."

Rev. GEO. GILFILLAN, in his edition of the 'Reliques' (1858) i, 260, prefaces the song as follows:

"There are one or two claimants for the authorship of this exquisite song, such as one J. G. Cooper and Geo. Alexander Stevens, but the song appeared while the former of these was a child and the other a youth."

GILFILLAN simply accepts PERCY's date, 1726, as correct, but does not investigate the subject.

Had the poem been found in PERCY's Folio MS., light would probably have been thrown on it in the masterly revision of HALES and FURNIVALL; but such was not the case.

The original authorship is still an open question, but if we accept the statements of COOPER and PERCY, it is clear, (1) that the song, though written in the first half of the

seventeenth century, was not printed till 1726; (2) that this publication of 1726 did not avail to give it general publicity; (3) that this general publicity was first won for it by COOPER in 1754; (4) that, though latterly attributed to COOPER, he was never a "claimant for its authorship," as GILFILLAN would have him. This is shown not only by his express disclaimer in the letter cited, but by the title of his Elegy.

Whether COOPER first saw the song in LEWIS's collection (1726), or whether PERCY first saw it in COOPER's letters (1754), "doth not yet appear"; but both conjectures are plausible.

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THE THREE RONDEAUX OF SIR THOMAS WYATT.

As is well known to students of earlier English poetry, Sir THOMAS WYATT composed nine poems which have come down to us classed as rondeaux. It is equally well known that but three of these nine poems found their way into that collection of miscellaneous poetry published in 1557 under the title of 'Tottel's Miscellany'—this miscellany forming a partial first edition of WYATT's poetry along with certain poems by HENRY HOWARD, Earl of Surrey, and other compositions by unknown authors. These three poems which did appear in TOTTEL's collections were curiously disguised in form. Apparently they had fallen into the hands of some person—possibly the editor—ignorant of their appropriate peculiarity of verse arrangement, who had set himself straightway to reduce the unfamiliar rondeau form to a certain semblance of the sonnet type, which he evidently thought preferable, if not intended. The result is a curious anomaly corresponding to no standard of verse arrangement to be found in WYATT's poetry or elsewhere.

The text of these rondeaux as given by Dr. NOTT in his notable edition of the poet, London, 1815, based upon the reading of the Harington MS. No. (1), presumably WYATT's own MS.,* differs materially from TOTTEL's

*For a more complete discussion of these texts, see the monograph: 'Sir Thomas Wyatt and his Poems,' D. C. Heath & Co., Boston, 1889.

text, and preserves for us the true rondeau form in which the poems were originally cast. Yet strangely enough all subsequent editions have followed TOTTEL's reading in preference to NOTT's, the Aldine and the Riverside editions among them; and this in spite of the fact that attention was called to the dubious reading by AUSTIN DOBSON in the *Athenæum* in 1878. Recent study of the poet has suggested a few notes which may be worth

preserving; and inasmuch as NOTT's volume is not generally accessible to American students, it may not be amiss to reproduce here the text of the Harington MS. as NOTT has given it to us—unfortunately with spelling modernized and consequent slight change of form.

The two readings are given in parallel columns.

NOTT'S READING.

Rondeau I.

1. BEHOLD, LOVE, thy power how she despiseth:
2. My great pain, how little she regardeth.
3. The holy oath, whereof she takes no cure,
4. Broken she hath, and yet she bideth sure
5. Right at her ease, and little thee dreadeth.
6. Weaponed thou art, and she unarmed sitteth:
7. To thee disdainful her life she leadeth:
8. To me spiteful, without cause or measure:
9. Behold, Love!
10. I am in hold, if thee pity moveth,
11. Go bend thy bow that stony hearts breaketh,
12. And with some stroke revenge the displeasure
13. Of thee and him that sorrow doth endure,
14. And, as his lord, thee lowly here entreateth.
15. Behold Love!

Rondeau II.

1. WHAT VAILETH TRUTH, or by it to take pain?
2. To strain by steadfastness for to attain,
3. To be just and true, and flee from doubleness?
4. Since all alike, where ruleth craftiness,
5. Rewarded is, both false and plain.
6. Soonest he speeds that most can feign:
7. True meaning heart is had in disdain.
8. Against deceit and doubleness,
9. What vaileth truth?
10. Deceived is he by crafty train,
11. That means no guile, and doth remain
12. Within the trap without redress.
13. But for to love, lo, such a mistress
14. Whose cruelty nothing can refrain,
15. What vaileth truth?

Rondeau III.

1. GO, BURNING SIGHS, unto the frozen heart,
2. Go Break the ice which pity's painful dart
3. Might never pierce; and if mortal prayer
4. In heaven be heard, at least I desire
5. That death or mercy be end of my smart.
6. Take with thee pain, whereof I have my part,
7. And eke the flame from which I cannot start;
8. And leave me then in rest I you require.
9. Go burning sighs!
10. I must go work, I see, by craft and art,
11. For truth and faith in her are laid apart.
12. Alas I cannot therefore assail her
13. With pitiful plaint and scolding fyre,
14. That out of my breast doth strainingly start.
15. Go burning sighs!

TOTTET'S READING.

Rondeau I.

BEHOLD, LOVE, thy power how she despiseth:
 My grevous payn how litle she regardeth,
 The solemne oathe whereof she takes no cure,
 Broken she hath; and yet, she bydeth sure,
 Right at her ease, and litle thee she dredeth.
 Weaponed thou art, and she unarmed sitteth:
 To thee disdainful, all her life she leadeth:
 To me spitefull, without just cause, or measure.
 Behold Love, how proudly she triumpheth,
 I am in hold, but if thee pitie meveth:
 Go, bend thy bow, that stony hartes breaketh;
 And with some stroke revenge the great displeasure
 Of thee, ane him that sorow doth endure.
 And as his Lord thee lowly here entreateth.

Rondeau II.

WHAT VAILETH TROTH? or by it, to take payn?
 To strive by stedfastness, for to attayn
 How to be just; and flee from doublenesse?
 Sinse all alyke, where ruleth craftinesse,
 Rewarded is both crafty false and plain.
 Soonest he spedes, that most can lye and fayn.
 True meaning hart is had in hye disdain,
 Against deceipt, and cloked doublenesse,
 What vaileth troth, or parfit stedfastnesse
 Deceavd is he, by false and crafty trayn.
 That meanes no gyle, and faithfull doth remayn
 Within the trap, without help or redresse,
 But for it love (lo) such a stern maistresse,
 Where cruelty dwelles, alas it were in vain.

Rondeau III.

GO BURNING SIGHES into the frosen hart,
 Go breake the yse which pities painfull dart,
 Myght never perce and yf that mortall prayer,
 In heaven be herd, at lest yet I desire:
 That death or mercy end my wofull smart.
 Take with thee payn whereof I have my part,
 And eke the flame from which I cannot start,
 And leave me then in rest, I you require:
 Go burning sighs fulfil that I desire.
 I must go worke I see by craft and art,
 For truth and faith in her is laid apart:
 Alas, I can not therefore assaile her,
 With pitfull complaint and scalding fier,
 That from my brest disceivably doth start.

The first result of the comparison is the removal of any doubt as to the priority of the rondeau arrangement. That must have preceded the arrangement preserved by TOTTEL; it could not in the nature of things have followed from it. In this connection it is interesting to examine the original of the third rondeau, which is in part a translation of PETRARCH'S 102d sonnet, *Ite, caldi sospiri, al freddo core*. The first four verses of the rondeau are a very close translation of the opening quatrain of the sonnet; and the fourth verse reads as follows in NOTT, in PETRARCH, and in TOTTEL:

"That death or mercy be end of my smart."

"*Morte o mercè sia fine al mio dolore.*"

"That death or mercy end my wofull smart."

There can be no doubt as to priority of translation

Secondly we note the evident purpose of the alterations. Not only is the rondeau distorted into an anomalous combination of fourteen verses, but there are numerous additions obviously designed to remedy defects in metre or in accentuation. In the first rondeau, with the exception of the change from *holy* to *solemn* in v. 3, and the filling out of the refrain, all the changes are of this nature; and the case is similar with the second and third.

Let us look for a moment at the verse construction. Taking NOTT's reading as a basis, we find that with exception of v. 14 in the first rondeau, and v. 8 in the third, every line of these two poems contains exactly ten syllables (the refrain, of course, not coming into the account). The rime-scheme corresponds to this division and confirms it. Hence we have to read, more or less mechanically:—

"Behold, Love, thy power how she *déspisèth*;
My great pain how little she *regardèth*,"

with an appreciable subordinate accent on the final syllable, which is intended to serve as accented rime-syllable throughout. The word *power* (v. 1) is here monosyllabic. Thus read we have a rime-scheme as follows; *déspisèth*: *regardèth*: *dreadèth*: *sittèth*: *leadèth*: *movèth*: *breakèth*: *èntreatèth*. In the rondeau arrangement there are but two rime-sounds: the second rime is thus exhibited:—

"And with some stroke revenge the *díspleasùre*
Of thee and him that sorrow doth *endùre*."—

and the scheme is in full: *cùre*: *sùre*: *measùre*: *díspleasùre*: *endùre*. A similarly accentuated rime is found again and again in WYATT'S poems, merely perpetuating an older pronunciation which was now passing out of vogue. Thus in the third rondeau we must read—

"Might never pierce; and if mortal *prìer*
In heaven be heard, at least I *dísìer*"—

and the rime runs on: *réquìer*: *hèr*: *fìer*. And so we find a correct rime-principle in these two poems, carried out too with great regularity. We cannot forbear to add in passing that this peculiar verse structure, by no means confined to these two rondeaux, but often characteristic of WYATT'S poems, presumably the earlier ones, is very suggestive of a method of scanning more artificial than is generally suspected; and calls attention to what might prove an interesting field of study.

The second rondeau differs from the other two in that after the first four verses, the metre passes from the five-accent measure into the old four-accent verse familiar to WYATT'S readers in the poems:

"I abide and abide; end better abide," (Ald. ed. 20).

"I am as I am and so will I be," (" 147).

"Sometime I sigh, sometime I sing," (" 112).

"Help me to seek! for I lost it there;" (" 24).

In this rondeau syllables have been added to make the defective verses conform to the regular five-accent type. The alteration in v. 14 is necessary because of the lost refrain.

Now the question as to the identity of the emendator still remains. Was it the poet himself who made the changes, or was it some other? First, as to the possibility that it be WYATT'S work. In my discussion of the poem "How oft have I, my dear and cruel foe" (Monograph, p. 62), I have tried to show that in some cases TOTTEL'S reading is really based upon a version later than that contained in the Harington MS. and coming from the poet's own hand. There was opportunity for such emendation during WYATT'S period of restful retirement at Allington in 1541-2,

"...in Kent and Christendom
Among the Muses, where I read and rhyme;"

as he wrote to his friend JOHN POINS in his second satire. And even Dr. NOTT surmised that Sir THOMAS might have been planning for the publication of his works.

Secondly, are there any indications of WYATT's handiwork in either of the three rondeaux? The first rondeau contains nothing of significance. The change from *holy* to *solemne* (v. 3) is not called for by any metrical irregularity; it is, however, a pleasanter reading, but may as well be a corruption as a correction of the text. It should be noted that the refrain verse is awkwardly patched out; and that we here have an *a*-rime where the other two poems show a *b*-rime, the greater ease with which it could be supplied probably accounting for this variation. The third rondeau is perhaps not quite so unfruitful as the first; for while it is possible that the changes in verses 5 and 14 may be the emendations of an editor who found the original metre too harsh to be retained, it is strange that other verses fully as discordant should have been admitted unaltered. These are quite important alterations, manifest improvements, and do no violence to the thought. The poem, as we have seen, is a partial translation of a sonnet; and several of its verses fall into the old four-accent type: these facts may have suggested the working over of the poem.

The second rondeau possibly does contain distinct traces of WYATT's pen. Let me for comparison quote from the poem "Give place all ye that doth rejoice" (Ald. ed. 133) one stanza:—

"What vaileth truth, or steadfastness,
Or still to serve without reproof!
What vaileth faith or gentleness,
Where cruelty doth reign as chief!"

The similarity in the wording of this stanza to verses 9 and 14 in the rondeau, may be a mere coincidence, but it is certainly suggestive, and I incline to think the two passages are the work of the same hand. The poem from which the quotation is made does not appear in the 'Miscellany,' and probably was never under the eye of its editor; had it been known to him, it would doubtless have been printed with the sonnets. As before stated, v. 14 required alteration when the refrain

was dropped, and hence the motive for the change. Less significant, but possibly of interest, is the fact that WYATT uses the combination "lie and feign" in his second satire, "Say he is rude, that cannot *lie and feign*" (v. 73), and that in the same satire he twice uses the expression "to cloak":—

"To cloak the truth, for praise without desert" (v. 20);

"With nearest virtue aye to cloak the vice" (v. 61).

There is no great stress to be laid upon this recurrence of the words, but as they happen to be expressions of unusual vigor, it is in point to note that they are not altogether strange to WYATT himself: "*crafty* false" (v. 5) is evidently a borrowing from v. 10; and the "*false* and *crafty*" of that verse is an example of fair exchange. I am not blind to the possibility that "parfit steadfastness," of the refrain verse, may have been suggested by the wording of v. 2; but I do not depart from my conjecture. Verse 3 is a puzzle; the extra syllable in the first measure was doubtless the cause of the alteration, but the change is certainly unfortunate, and, to my mind, uncalled for. WYATT frequently admits an extra syllable in his latest versification, several instances occurring in the satires confessedly productions of his later period. The sense is rendered very obscure by the change; and here possibly is an instance of editorial criticism.

Is there any known reason why WYATT should have changed the form of his rondeaux thus? Apparently none. And yet might he not have made these alterations in part at least? He might; and I believe he did. If one could only find some trace of the Harington MSS., a careful study of the text, especially that of "MS. No. 2," to which NOTT makes occasional obscure reference, might give an answer to this, and to some other riddles as well. Until such an examination has been made, it is idle to affirm one thing or the other; the contrary possibility always remains. Meanwhile it is certainly more gracious to retain the reading of a text indubitably stamped with the poet's autograph, and of particular interest from its priority of date as well as for its superior poetic form and finish.

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